Toward a Fully Realized Human Being: Dewey's Active-Individual-always-in-the-Making

Hongmei Peng

Abstract

This essay explores the conception of the individual in Dewey's democratic writings. Following Dewey's lead, I argue that it is human individuality, including our impulses, habits, and capacities, along with an appropriate environment, that represents the uniqueness and power of every individual. In achieving our individuality, we form habits to live and to grow; we strive toward a fully realized human being, while we perform a unique function in keeping the community growing. Dewey's theory of self-construction provides a theoretical foundation for an active-individual-as-a-societal-contributor-always-in-the -making that in turn contributes to the improvement of educational opportunities for all people.

"What constitutes a true human being?" Over Dewey's long and prolific career, he continued to think over this question, as he did over issues of democracy. For this thinker, democracy shouldn't be restricted to "a political institutional device" (Jane Dewey, 1939/1989, p. 29). Dewey plainly points out, "*The fundamental principle of democracy is that the ends of freedom and individuality for all can be attained only by means that accord with those ends*" and "[D]emocratic means and the attainment of democratic ends are one and inseparable" (1937/1985, pp. 298-299). Democracy is something that we—people—work in a democratic way to achieve and maintain, not something out there, already made, or something duplicable, transplantable. Ultimately, Dewey points out for us, democracy lies in every individual. His words nicely remind us that to search for democracy, we need to ponder the questions, "What constitutes a true human being?" and "Who constitute the people?" I focus my discussion on the first question and draw attention to people themselves or individuals in terms of self-construction. By examining Dewey's conception of

self or individual, I offer a way to work through our "democratic means" toward the "attainment of democratic ends"—the ends of human individuality—as Dewey insists.

Even though Dewey never presents his thoughts of self-construction as a systematic whole, he, in effect, scatters his ideas on individuals into various contexts and develops them in connection with a dismaying variety of democratic writings. I start with Dewey's idea of democracy, followed by his notion of the individual, by referring to different texts where he touches the heart of these concepts.

Dewey deems democracy as "a way of life, the truly moral and human way of life" (Jane Dewey, 1939/1989, p. 29). This ideal reveals that only when individuals practice democracy in their everyday lives and in every person-to-person relationship they develop can democracy be possibly achieved. In particular, there are two main considerations in a democracy for Dewey:

> From the standpoint of the individual, it consists in having a responsible share according to capacity in forming and directing the activities of the groups to which one belongs and in participating according to need in the values which the groups sustain. From the standpoint of the groups, it demands liberation of the potentialities of members of a group in harmony with the interests and goods which are common. Since every individual is a member of many groups, this specification cannot be fulfilled except when different groups interact flexibly and fully in connection with other groups. (1927/1991, p. 147)

This is what Dewey calls "the nature of the democratic idea in its generic social sense" (p. 147), which actually has a three-fold focus rooted in our inseparable as well as undeniable sociality. First, it includes individuals' contributions to groups and participation in common values based on "capacity" and "need." Second, it is the communal power that brings out and supports individuals' potential and development, while the entire human community, the largest group, is actually constituted by an uncountable number of various groups individuals belong to. Individuals and human communities consequently demonstrate an interdependent relationship similar to ecosystems. In order to achieve the best possibilities of both individuals and the human community as a whole, the third aspect of the democratic ideal is to have all the groups communicate and interact with one another as much as possible.

The following effort is to seek the "individual" Dewey defines in his writings on democracy. My exploratory examination of the individual is an acknowledgement of our essential sociality, although "groups," which actually need another essay to examine, are not discussed in detail in this work.

A Socially Related Individual

Influenced by Darwinism and George Mead's (1934) social behaviorist theory, Dewey never takes individuals as something ready-made, already there, but social beings who start their lives and develop a sense of self in relation to their caregivers

and social surroundings.[1] In one of his classics, *Democracy and Education*, Dewey gives an articulation of individual growth. He writes:

> As matter of fact every individual has grown up, and always must grow, in a social medium. His responses grow intelligent, or gain meaning, simply because he lives and acts in a medium of accepted meanings and values. Through social intercourse, through sharing in the activities embodying beliefs, he gradually acquires a mind of his own. (1916/1944, p. 295)

For Dewey, each individual is born immature, helpless, without language, beliefs, ideas, or social standard (p. 2). It is "a social medium" of "accepted meanings and values" where an individual's mind is rooted and grows through participation in various social activities and interactions. As the component elements of society, in return individuals' behavior is bound to have a societal influence, which equivalently constitutes our essential sociality. In Dewey's words, "No man lives to himself; his welfare is part of the welfare of his society; his suffering is always at society's cost" (1973, p. 115). When he critiques the erroneous assumptions underlying the doctrine of free enterprise, which dominated in most of the industrial nations in the early nineteenth century, Dewey points out that a contract is not a purely personal affair between the parties who agree to it: "on the contrary, all contracts have social connotations" (p. 114). Dewey further considers, for example, the consequences of a group of men engaging in work that will clearly be injurious to their health. He explains,

> Their agreement to undertake such work would not be a mere personal concern of these hundred men, but could harm their whole society. Parents whose health is impaired may give birth to defective children who become a burden on society, or who in their turn may further beget defective children. (p. 115)

Dewey is not interested in eugenics; rather, the above example emphasizes that no contract is ever just a matter of personal relationship. As long as we live in the world, we cannot avoid making decisions or conducting ourselves without influencing others—our family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, the communities we belong to, or even strangers who accidentally pass by us on the street. The effect can be negative, as the above case shows, or positive.

The sociality of individuals is not only embodied in the value-laden social context where they form selfhood or the societal influence associated with every personal choice, but is also revealed through the fact that they develop relationships with others to help them grow, starting at infancy. As Dewey notes,

> Each human being is born an infant. He is immature, helpless, dependent upon the activities of others. That many of these dependent beings survive is proof that others in some measure look out for them, take care of them. Mature and better equipped beings are aware of the consequences of their acts upon those of the young. They not only act conjointly with them, but they act in that especial kind of association which manifests

> interest in the consequences of their conduct upon the life and growth of the young. (1927/1991, p. 24)

Here, Dewey reveals a relationship between individual growth, or more specifically the growth of the young, and "others." In *Democracy and Education*, he evokes the image of human infant as a metaphor for immaturity, which indeed designates a "positive force or ability"—the power to grow instead of "void or lack" (1916/1944, p. 42). Through this image, one that he uses repeatedly, Dewey reminds us of the earliest relations that we build with others in childhood and that allow us to grow. The following is another example that helps us see the importance of "others" in the formation of our own experience:

> Because of his physical dependence and impotency, the contacts of the little child with nature are mediated by other persons. Mother and nurse, father and older children, determine what experiences the child shall have; they constantly instruct him as to the meaning of what he does and undergoes; the conceptions that are socially current and important become the child's principles of interpretation and estimation long before he attains to personal and deliberate control of conduct. (1920/1964, p. 92)

Again, Dewey revives a memory of childhood when individuals are physically vulnerable, but with the help of caregivers, come to be stronger and more independent, both physically and mentally. Even when we enter our adulthood, we are still related to "others." If we look back on the life journey we have gone through, we can recall without difficulty how many times we resorted to others for help when we were confused or had questions, and how important "others" were in exposing us to new adventures and experiences, owing to which our potential was released and our individual growth enhanced.

So, the inference is that the sociality of human beings is a fact individuals cannot and should not deny. First, the current meanings and values we accept are formed and passed on in a social medium with individual involvement. Second, every individual's choice or behavior bears a societal influence, negative or positive. Finally, it is in a social context where individuals develop indispensable relationships with one another and achieve individual growth, which, in return, through individuals' societal influence, brings about a flourishing human society.

If we deepen our thinking in a historical and intellectual context, we see that what Dewey adopts is an organic conception of society that exists for and in individuals. The root of his thought can be traced back to Dewey's years at college. By the middle-to-late nineteenth century, the study of the theory of evolution and natural science, including physiology, had come to be popular among professionals and in academic institutions. Owing to these influences, Dewey started to form "an impressive picture of the unity of the living creature" in his mind, which was later developed to an organic view of human society (Jane Dewey, 1939/1989; Dewey, 1888/1967). Using the term "organism," Dewey (1888/1967) means "a thoroughly reciprocal" relationship between the individual and the whole, namely human so-

ciety (p. 237). Compared to the animal body, which he describes as in an "incomplete" organic relation, Dewey deems,

> human society represents a more perfect organism. The whole lives truly in every member, and there is no longer the appearance of physical aggregation, or continuity. The organism manifests itself as what it truly is, an ideal or spiritual life, a unity of *will*. If then, society and the individual are really organic to each other, then the individual is society concentrated. (1888/1967, p. 237)

This statement furnishes further insights into Dewey's idea of social organism involving the independent organic individual and the organic whole—"a unity of will." For Dewey, every individual who does not deny or remove his or her human qualities is essentially a social being; however, the ultimate reality lies within each individual.

Based on this conception of social organism, Dewey's individual by no means embraces the social/individual or public/private dualism. His individual in every sense of sociality is a being of independence. More importantly, Dewey acknowledges individuals as organically capable and physically independent components that participate in the life of the whole. This stand protects his individual from being accused of social determinism or being the "generalized other"—he offers a contextualization of the word "individual" that should be considered in all of its human qualities reflected in everyday life. This proposition leads to another perspective, discussed below, that will help us understand Dewey's active individual—the true connotation of "individual"—a societal contributor of individuality.

Active-Societal-Contributor-always-in-the-Making[2]

In *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Dewey looks into the meaning of "individual," stating, "'[I]ndividual'…is a blanket term for the immense variety of specific reactions, habits, dispositions and powers of human nature that are evoked, and confirmed under the influences of associated life" (1920/1964, p. 199). Obviously, Dewey does not think that "individual" simply means a single person or one thing. On the contrary, the word "individual" for Dewey contains many elements—human qualities which are gained and presented through living a communal life. This proposition resonates with another definition Dewey gives to "individual" in his *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics* (1891/1969). In a more concise way, Dewey describes individuals as persons of "individuality," who are "constituted by capacity and environment in their relation to one another" (p. 301, 303). Later, in *Democracy and Education* (1916/1944), Dewey refers to "capacity" as ability, a power, a positive force. If the word "individual" represents an abstract concept, "individuality" is one that fleshes out "individual," making abstraction concrete and practical, like the phrase "a field of selves" or "character."[3] Therefore, our inference is that more strictly speaking, it is individuality that covers both the social environment and "the immense variety of specific reactions, habits, dispositions and powers of human nature" for which "capacity" is another name.

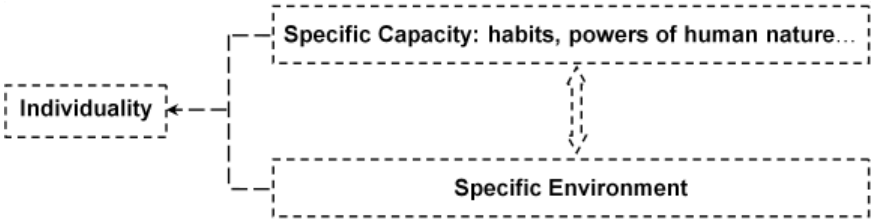

Figure 1. Components of Individuality

As shown in figure 1, individuality is an outgrowth of the interaction between human capacity and its surroundings. I use the line of dashes to show its dynamic characteristic, by which I mean capacity and environment are not two separated fields but permeable and interdependent. One thing about this connotation of individuality that challenges our attention is that individuals do not merely conform themselves to a particular environment or reproduce it, but always react on it and adjust it to fit themselves to it. What really matters in this reacting and adjusting process is human "capacity," as Dewey's individual represents an active entity and a contributor to the construction of accepted values and beliefs, and hence changes society as a whole. I now move on to further consider the term "capacity."

I start with *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics*, where Dewey provides a detailed description of capacity right after that of "environment" as the other "constituent factor" of individuality. He claims,

> it is capacity which makes the environment really an environment to the individual. The environment is not simply the facts which happen objectively to lie about an agent; it is such part of the facts as may be related to the capacity and the disposition and gifts of the agent." (1891/1969, pp. 302-303)

As to why the environment does not just "happen objectively" and how human capacity functions, Dewey continues,

> Two members of the same family may have what, to the outward eye, are exactly the same surroundings, and yet each may draw from these surroundings wholly unlike stimulus, material and motives. Each has a different environment, made different by his own mode of selection; by the different way in which his interests and desires play upon the plastic material about him. It is not, then, the environment as physical of which we are speaking, but as it appeals to consciousness, as it is affected by the make-up of the agent. This is the *practical* or *moral* environment. The environment is not, then, what is then and there present in space. (p. 303)

This articulation implies that individuals interpret their surroundings differently due to their unique capacities that reconstruct a "practical" environment in individuals' consciousness, and hence capacity and social environment are actually two sides of the same coin. This interdependent relationship reflects Dewey's position

on the union of mind and world, and moreover distinguishes Dewey's individual with a stress on the functioning of human capacity from a socially determined individual.

Covered by "capacity," "habits" is another concept that deserves our attention, and on which Dewey concentrated as he developed his social psychology. When lecturing in China in the early 1900s, Dewey talked of habit as "a regulated pattern of individual behavior derived from prior experience" (1973, p. 85). When a habit becomes common to the members of a society, it marks the birth of a custom. For Dewey, from a sociopsychological perspective, both habits and customs are "the most economical means of getting cumulative value from the common experience of life" (p. 85). This fact is accentuated in infancy—where each human being begins life completely dependent upon others who pass on their habits to the immature. Habits are acquired and save us from thinking "about each of the innumerable actions we perform every day" (p. 85). We form our habits early through assimilation or reproduction due to our immaturity. Dewey also notes that immaturity entails two chief characteristics: plasticity and dependence (1916/1944, p. 42).

How is immaturity connected to plasticity and the latter to habits? To answer this question, I turn to another work, *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922/2002), an introduction to Dewey's social psychology that was originally published right after his twenty-six-month visit to China. In this book, "the place of impulse in conduct" is discussed throughout Part II, where Dewey refers to impulse as "something primitive, yet loose, undirected, initial" (105). Impulses are native to us and unshaped, just as our immaturity. They are flexible starting points for diverse activities, since "any impulse may become organized into almost any disposition according to the way it interacts with surroundings" (p. 95). For instance, curiosity may become scholarly diligence, irresistible eagerness, or pathetic indifference. So it would not be false to infer that from a sociopsychological perspective, immaturity in actuality takes its roots in human impulses. Indeed, the plasticity of immaturity and that of impulse are practical equivalents. Accordingly, we cannot ignore the most precious part of plasticity that consists of the ability to form habits of independent judgment and of creative initiation, which Dewey (1916/1944) also names in general "active habits." The ultimate outcome, in Dewey's view, depends on how human impulses interweave with each other. This in turn hinges on what the social environment will supply (1922/2002, p. 95).

I now turn to a different text to consider a significant contribution Dewey makes to the conception of active and contributing individuals of continual growth: his notion of "active habits." In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey proposes the aim of education as the continuity/growth of life where individuals and society are both found. He categorizes habits as habituation and active capacities to readjust activity to meet new conditions. The former grounds growth, while the latter constitutes growing. "Active habits," in Dewey's words, "involve thought, invention, and initiative in applying capacities to new aims," and they are rooted in human impulses as

discussed above (1916/1944, pp. 52-53). The relationships between impulse, habits, environments, and growth can be demonstrated in figure 2.

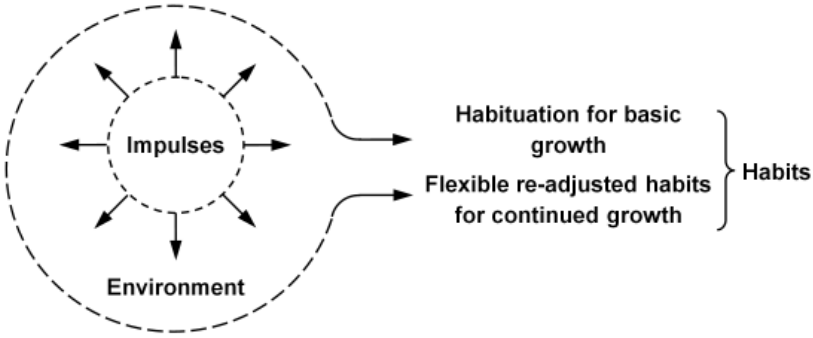

Figure 2. Formation of Human Habits

From this figure we can see that in the formation of individuality, what really interact with the actual environment are our impulses, which are native to us, unshaped, and capable of development. It is this plasticity of impulse, along with a necessary environment, that furnishes tremendous chances to form human habits, including active ones. Both forms of habits are equally important to us, while the active ones more likely represent the individuality of varied resourcefulness, initiative, and inventiveness, as Dewey describes. Impulse intrinsic to us is a valuable source of liberating power to form flexible, easily re-adjusted habits—the active habits—to bring in new elements, to meet new situations, and hence to generate continual growth.

To facilitate active habits and continual growth, Dewey refers to Emerson, who proposes the valuation of impulses and the intervention of appropriate education: to keep children natural, but to "stop off their uproar, fooling, and horseplay"; to keep children's nature and "*arm it with knowledge in the very direction in which it points*" (1916/1944, p. 52). For Dewey, human nature consists of human impulses, and it is shapeable in disposing of bad habits and the formation of active ones. For both, the room for the play of impulse itself as well as education or instruction is indispensable. In this regard, human impulses and the appropriate intervention of education provide possibilities for the active-individual-as-a-societal-contributor-always-in-the-making.

We have touched upon a most debatable and extensive topic: the changeability of human nature. To avoid some unnecessary confusion, I want to take a look at this problem. By human nature, Dewey doesn't mean innate human goodness or evil, but the "objective study of observable human behavior and scientifically derived hypotheses about its changing trends" (1973, p. 85). From a pragmatic perspective, it is idle if we devote our effort to the debate whether the innate needs or constituents of individuals change or not, since either of the positions are hard to show. Therefore, Dewey (1922/2002) focuses his theory on observable human habits where impulse is a constituent. This focus makes us aware of human gifts,

problems, and changing tendencies that help accomplish the best possibility of individuality. Grounded upon a theory of changeable human nature, Dewey's individual, or more specifically individuality, is by no means settled or a "generalized other." So the question becomes: How are our innate elements, impulses, to be most efficiently modified to successfully cope with the environment under given conditions? "This problem," Dewey believes, "is ultimately that of education in its widest sense" (1938/1961, p. 192).

Individuality must be educated, Dewey accentuates. The construction of our individuality is a never-ending project as long as our impulses are guided by a deliberate education. Moreover, Dewey wants us to be aware that individuality cannot be fully educated by confining its operations to traditional book knowledge or, say, standardized exams. Deviating from the quantitative comparative scale usually employed to evaluate students, Dewey believes that full education comes only "when there is a responsible share on the part of each person, in proportion to capacity, in sharing the aims and policies of the social groups to which he belongs. This fact fixes the significance of democracy" (1920/1964, p. 209). This suggestion is a call for the creation of opportunities for the play of individuality. It also reminds me of the maternal grandfather's farm in Dewey's memory, where life is full of active occupational responsibilities, intimate personal contacts among people, and a harmonious environment (Martin, 2002). His emphasis on individuality shows a belief in individuals' unique capacity and contribution to society that gives hope to the accomplishment of the best possibilities of both individuals and society. On the other hand, his emphasis on the creation of opportunities for the play of individuality is a moral consideration. As Dewey argues, "The ground of democratic ideas and practices is faith in the potentialities of individuals, faith in the capacity for positive developments if proper conditions are provided" (1940/1960, p. 242). He goes further to illustrate this idea in another text:

> Individuality in a social and moral sense is something to be wrought out. It means initiative, inventiveness, varied resourcefulness, assumption of responsibility in choice of belief and conduct. These are not gifts, but achievements. As achievements, they are not absolute but relative to the use that is to be made of them. And this use varies with the environment." (1920/1964, p. 194)

Individuality is not presented automatically at birth. Individuals cannot actualize their individuality by doing nothing or insulating themselves from the outside world. In other words, the inference from the above statement is that individuality is meaningless without the application of specific capacity and interaction with surroundings and provided opportunities.

In summation, the plasticity of human impulse and the consideration of the environment/deliberate education in giving a direction and providing a platform ground a theoretical foundation for active-individual-as- a-societal-contributor-always-in-the-making that in turn contributes significantly to the improvement of ed-

ucational opportunities for all people. The following comment from *Individualism Old and New* well expresses Dewey's position on the conception of individual:

> When the patterns that form individuality of thought and desire are in line with actuating social forces, that individuality will be released for creative effort. Originality and uniqueness are not opposed to social nurture; they are saved by it from eccentricity and escape. The positive and constructive of individuals, as manifested in the remaking and redirection of social forces and conditions, is itself a social necessity…whatever is distinctive and potentially creative in individuals, and individuals thus freed will be the constant makers of a continuously new society. (1929/1930, p. 143)

All in all, individuality and the society are interdependent, or in Dewey's phrase, "organic" to each other. Dewey notes, "Only by being true to the full growth of all the individuals who make it up, can society by any chance be true to itself" (1900/1962, p. 7). It is also true that in the absence of appropriate social conditions, individuality is impossible to be achieved.

Function as Ethics of Self-construction

Dewey's theory of individuality, which resides in "specific capacity" and "specific environment," indicates hope for individuals to grow toward their full potentials—as fully realized human beings—if proper environments are provided. This ideal is not only individual as well as social, but also the moral end toward which human beings should strive. I now turn to look at the term "function," which Dewey (1891/1969) uses to express union of the two sides of individuality, capacity and environment. This will help us further look into Dewey's theory of self-construction and its relation to morality.

The term "function," which occurs in *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics,* describes "an active relation established between power of doing, on one side, and something to be done on the other" (1891/1969, p. 303). "So, morally," Dewey explains, "function is capacity *in action*; environment transformed into an element in personal service" (p. 304). The "moral end" or "the good," Dewey contends, is "[t]he performance by a person of his specific function, this function consisting in an activity which realizes wants and powers with reference to their peculiar surroundings" (p. 304). Dewey shows his belief in every human being as he does in democracy. It is a belief that acknowledges the unique function of every individual within a "peculiar" surrounding, and the individual's capacity to become a fully realized human being, by extension creating a better community. This is a moral way to live and a moral end to strive for, Dewey informs us. Accordingly, the completion of this performance of individualized function is with indispensable consciousness and intelligence in taking needs of the environment into account.

In line with the idea of "active habit" developed in *Democracy and Education*, Dewey makes a critical point that individual capacities and environments live in mutual adjustment, not the one-sided accommodation of individuals to a

given environment. "'[A]djustment,' to have a moral sense," Dewey claims, "means *making the environment a reality for one's self*" (1891/1969, p. 313). "True adjustment," Dewey continues, lies in more than adjusting to a fixed environment, often asserting oneself against one's surroundings, for instance. He further clarifies, "*[T]ransformation* of existing circumstances is moral duty rather than mere reproduction of them. The environment must be plastic to the ends of the agent" (p. 313). Dewey's humanism is revealed in this short statement, which again centers on human capacities and their development. Therefore, inferentially, fitting one's self in a particular environment may demand substantially changing it. If, in Dewey's case, self-construction is a moral ideal, the change/reform of society is an ethical as well as individual need.

Conclusion

For Dewey, the term "individual" denotes both sociality and individuality, which protects this pragmatist thinker from falling into the trap of "generalized other" or being accused of social determinism. In Dewey's mind, every individual is born equal with his/her uniqueness. In effect, it is human individuality, including our impulses, habits, capacities, and an appropriate environment, that represents the uniqueness and power of every individual. This individuality is something to be "wrought out" and is emotionally, intellectually, and consciously sustained; it is a moral product, a result of social relationships, a consequence of publicly acknowledged and stable societal functions. In achieving our individuality, we form our habits to live and to grow; in achieving our individuality, we strive toward a fully realized human being, achieving our best possibilities, while we perform our unique function in keeping our community growing. In the full growth of every individual member, according to Dewey, we find a flourishing community that provides various opportunities for human development.

Dewey offers us a direction for how to move beyond the term "democracy" itself in search for a democracy. His individual/self grounds further research on human needs and responsibilities and the concept of community in a democracy. Following Dewey's lead, we see the unsubstitutable value equally in every individual and the significance of an appropriate environment for individuals to grow and to learn how to live a democratic life. As educators, we also need to consider how to provide an environment that secures the full use of intelligence in the process of forming habits and counteracts the tendency to resist change and rest on past achievements. His thoughts of self-construction provide a theoretical foundation for an active-individual-as-a-societal-contributor-always-in-the-making that in turn contributes significantly to the improvement of educational opportunities for all people. "Education for democracy" is not only what we cry for in our theoretical writings, but what we do and strive for by establishing an agenda to encourage human uniqueness and cultivate individuality in our students with a deliberate education, where our educators are aware of the plasticity of human

nature and make unremitting efforts in creating proper and meaningful environments for all students.

We need free exchanges of ideas among a community of scholars on the questions: "What constitutes a true human being?" and "Who constitute the people?"—in short, on the issue of people themselves, in search of democracy. If this essay can trigger the reader's thinking on the relationship between the achievement of individuality and the realization of democracy, I have accomplished my modest goal in casting a brick to attract jade.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to the anonymous reviewers for their careful reading of this manuscript and constructive suggestions for improving my work. I appreciate their helpful criticisms.

Notes

1. One of my reviewers suggested that I chose to ignore Hegelian philosophy, which may have had a life-long influence on Dewey. I don't wish to deny that Hegel's theory of synthesis contributed to Dewey's effort to overcome dualisms and search for the idea of organic unity. I pointed out Darwin and Mead to emphasize the strong and direct influences of modern science on the development of Dewey's conception of individual.
2. Greene (1995) and Thayer-Bacon (2008) inspired me with their "democracy-always-in-the-making."
3. Sometimes Dewey uses the terms individual, individuality, personality, self/selfhood, and character interchangeably in his works.

References

Dewey, J. (1930). *Individualism—old and new*. New York: Minton, Balch and Company. (Original work published 1929).

Dewey, J. (1944). *Democracy and education*. New York: The Free Press. (Original work published 1916).

Dewey, J. (1960). Time and individuality. In Richard J. Bernstein (Ed.). *On experience, nature, and freedom* (pp. 224-243). New York: Liberal Arts Press. (Original work published 1940).

Dewey, J (1961). Does human nature change? In *Philosophy of education* (pp. 184-192). Paterson, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams & Co. (Original work published 1938).

Dewey, J. (1964). *Reconstruction in philosophy*. Boston: The Beacon Press. (Original work published 1920).

Dewey, J. (1967). The ethics of democracy. In Jo Ann Boydston (Ed.). *John Dewey: The early works,* 1882-1898 (Vol. 1, pp. 227-249). Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press. (Original work published 1888).

Dewey, J. (1969). Outlines of a critical theory of ethics. In Jo Ann Boydston (Ed.). *John Dewey: The early works,* 1882-1898 (Vol. 3, pp. 237-388). Carbondale and

Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press. (Original work published 1891).

Dewey, J. (1973). John Dewey lectures in China 1919-1920. Robert W. Clopton & Tsuin-chen Ou (Trans. and Eds.). Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii.

Dewey, J. (1985). Democracy is radical. In Jo Ann Boydston (Ed.). *John Dewey: The later works*, 1925-1953 (Vol. 2, pp. 297-299). Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press. (Original work published 1937).

Dewey, J. (1991) *The public and its problems.* Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press. (Original work published 1927).

Dewey, J. (2002). *Human nature and conduct*, Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc. (Original work published 1922).

Dewey, J. M. (Ed.). (1989). Biography of John Dewey. In Paul Arthur Schilpp & Lewis Edwin Hahn (Eds.). *The philosophy of John Dewey* (pp. 3-45). (Original work published 1939).

Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Martin, J. (2002). *The education of John Dewey: A biography*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society: From the standpoint of a social behaviorist*. C. W. Morris (Ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Thayer-Bacon, B. (2008). *Beyond liberal democracy in schools: The power of pluralism*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Hongmei Peng is a graduate of the University of Tennessee with a Ph.D. in Cultural Studies of Educational Foundations.
Email: hongmeipeng@gmail.com